United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, by unanimous resolution, decides that certain Iraqi citizens displaced by demarcation of Iraq-Kuwait border can receive compensation notwithstanding prohibition on remittal of funds.

+ Fifth Committee approves draft decisions by which General Assembly would authorize Secretary-General, on exceptional basis, to commit up to $200 million to maintain five peace-keeping operations this month.

+ Secretary-General's Senior Political Adviser reiterates need for additional personnel for UNPROFOR; says no possible contributors have been ruled out.

+ UNHCR warns that humanitarian effort in Jalalabad could be overwhelmed by Afghan war refugees; seeks $6 million for existing relief operations.

+ Bosnia and Herzogovina, in letter to Security Council, says Sarajevo cease-fire is being blatantly violated; asks Council to ensure compliance by Serb forces and implementation of relevant resolutions.

+ Commission on Status of Women to hold thirty-eighth session at Headquarters from 7 to 18 March; United Nations to commemorate International Women's Day on 8 March with "Women in Power" forum.

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The Security Council today decided that compensation payments can be made to certain Iraqi citizens relocated from Kuwait to Iraq as a result of the demarcation of the international boundary between the two States. The Council took that action, under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, by unanimously adopting resolution 899 (1994). In doing so, the Council concurred with the Secretary-General's view that such payments would be for humanitarian purposes and could be made notwithstanding resolution 991 (1991), which prohibited the remittal of funds to persons or bodies in Iraq.

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The Secretary-General expressed his view on the matter in a letter to the Council dated 22 February, in which he described arrangements for the payments to be made. After an assessment by an independent contractor, he determined that the relocated citizens would receive a total of 56 million Iraqi dinars for 95 farms and 15.5 million Iraqi dinars for 206 residential houses. Kuwait will pay that money into a trust fund established for the purpose and will cover all costs incurred by the United Nations as a result.

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Acting without a vote, the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) today approved five draft decisions by which the General Assembly would authorize the Secretary-General, on an exceptional basis, to commit almost $200 million to maintain five peace-keeping operations this month. The Secretary-General could commit up to $97 million gross for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR); almost $76 million for the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II); almost $21 million for the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ); some $3 million for the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL); and more than $2 million for the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM).

By the drafts, the Assembly would agree to decide on the question of assessments for the missions if decisions on their financing have not been made by 11 March for UNPROFOR and ONUMOZ, and by 15 March for UNOSOM II, ONUSAL, and UNIKOM, subject to the availability of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). The Assembly would also express deep concern at the current level of arrears of contributions, and would urge Member States in arrears to pay them promptly and in full.

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The Secretary-General's Senior Political Adviser, Alvaro de Soto, today reiterated an appeal to Member States to contribute additional personnel to the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). Yesterday, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for the former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, said UNPROFOR would need an extra 10,600 personnel if existing cease-fire agreements were to be upheld.

Mr. de Soto told correspondents at Headquarters that the United Nations was "strapped for peace-keeping troops" in the former Yugoslavia and had been studying ways to tackle the problem with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Potential contributors had been approached in recent weeks, and no possible sources had been ruled out, he said. The number of personnel needed would depend on such factors as the situation on the ground, progress in negotiations, the availability of equipment, and future Security Council decisions.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) today warned that the increase in the number of people fleeing fighting in Kabul and other areas in Afghanistan threatened to overwhelm the humanitarian relief effort in the eastern city of Jalalabad. The UNHCR said it desperately needed $6 million to cover current emergency relief operations.

Since 1 January, at least 600,000 persons have been displaced and refugees are arriving in Jalalabad at the rate of 1,600 a day, according to the UNHCR. There are shortages of food and water, and movement in refugee camps is being hindered by mines and unexploded ordnance. People fleeing into the countryside from Kabul are also being stranded in many areas by fighting and heavy snow.

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Bosnia and Herzogovina's Permanent Represenative to the United Nations has told the Security Council that the conditions of the Sarajevo cease-fire are been blantantly violated. In a letter to the Council dated 3 March, he charged that the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) had failed to locate six Serbian tanks concealed within the "exclusion zone." Those tanks had later been driven past United Nations observers who made no attempt to neutralize them or to place them under United Nations control. Furthermore, four grenades had been fired on Sarajevo on Wednesday.

The Bosnian Representative went on to say that the excessive flexibility granted to Serbian forces with regard to the cease-fire only encouraged further trangressions. The trend by Serbian forces of partial compliance with, followed by total disregard for the cease-fire had been well documented. He asked the Security Council to ensure that Serbian forces complied with the provisions of the cease-fire in Sarajevo and that the terms of relevant resolutions were fully implemented.

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The Commission on the Status of Women will hold its thirty-eighth session at Headquarters from 7 to 18 March. Among the items to be addressed are preparations for the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, and the monitoring of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. Under the themes of equality, development and peace, the Commission will consider such issues as equal pay, women in urban areas, and violence against women.

Meanwhile, the United Nations will commemorate International Women's Day on 8 March with a public forum at Headquarters entitled "Women in Power." The forum will highlight women in government and focus on obstacles to women achieving an equal share in decision-making. Speakers will include President Mary Robinson of Ireland; Madeleine Albright, United States Ambassador to the United Nations; and Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General of the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali will mark International Women's Day by renewing his commitment to the advancement of women to professional posts in the United Nations. Last year, he asked the Office of Human Resources Management for a plan to improve the status of women in the Secretariat. Measures being considered include succession planning, advertising to attract qualified candidates, exceptions to the recruitment freeze and consideration of women who have served elsewhere in the United Nations system.

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